

### REMARKS

Claims 1-40 are pending in this application, with claims 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31 and 36 being independent. No claims have been amended, cancelled, or added by this amendment. The specification has been amended to correct minor typographical errors. No new matter has been introduced by the present amendments.

In the Office Action mailed August 14, 2006, claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication Number 2004/0151829 ("Boroson") in view of U.S. Patent Number 7,034,451 ("Senbonmatsu"). Also in the Office Action, claims 11-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Boroson in view of Senbonmatsu and further in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,356,029 ("Hunter"). In applicants' December 14, 2006 response to the Office Action the contents of which is incorporated herein by reference, applicants argued, *inter alia*, that:

Senbonmatsu does not qualify as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) because it was not filed before applicant's invention of the claimed subject matter. Senbonmatsu was filed on August 20, 2003, which is before the filing date of the present application. However, the present application claims priority to an application filed in Japan on April 7, 2003, which is before the filing date of Senbonmatsu. The Japanese application, which provides support for the claimed subject matter, is evidence of applicant's invention of the claimed subject matter prior to Senbonmatsu's filing date. Applicant is preparing a translation of the Japanese application and will provide the translation upon completion as evidence of applicant's invention prior to Senbonmatsu's filing date.

In support of this argument, applicants submit herewith a verified translation of Japanese Patent Application No. 2003-103114, filed April 7, 2003, from which the present application claims priority. As set forth below, this Japanese application supports the claimed subject matter and therefore disqualifies Senbonmatsu as prior art.

The support for the claimed subject matter may be found in the verified translations at, for example, page 3, lines 5-11; page 4, line 29 to page 5, line 4; page 12, line 12 to page 24, line 10 and FIGS. 1A-5C. For at least these reasons and the reasons presented in applicants' December 14, 2006 response, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance.

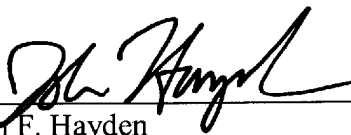
Applicant : Hiroko Abe et al.  
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Respectfully submitted,

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